

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) In a web-based business information system having an internal e-mail facility, a method for facilitating and tracking e-mail communications between (i) an end user of the web-based business information system and (ii) an external contact that is not an end user of the web-based business information system, comprising:

sending an initial e-mail message from said internal e-mail facility to the external contact, wherein a domain of a REPLY-TO field of said initial e-mail message corresponds to a domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a local part of said REPLY-TO field of said initial e-mail message comprises a tracking string encoding tracking information associated with said end user and said external contact with respect to said web-based business information system;

receiving at said internal e-mail facility a first reply e-mail message from said external contact replying to said initial e-mail message, said first reply e-mail message having a TO field including said tracking string; and

sending from said internal e-mail facility a modified version of said first reply e-mail message to a native e-mail address of the end user, said native e-mail address corresponding to a native e-mail system of the end user different than said internal e-mail facility and lying outside said web-based business information system, wherein a domain of a REPLY-TO field of said modified version of said first reply e-mail message corresponds to said domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a local part of said REPLY-TO field comprises a first modified version of said tracking string.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating a first metadata object based on said tracking string of said first reply e-mail message, wherein said first metadata object associates said first reply e-mail message with

said end user, said external contact, and at least one business functionality therebetween to be tracked by web-based business information system; and

archiving said first reply e-mail message according to at least one characteristic of said first metadata object.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising generating a viewable communication log screen including information derived from said first metadata object.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:
receiving a second reply e-mail message from said end user replying to said modified version of said first reply e-mail message, said second reply e-mail message having a TO field including said first modified version of said tracking string; and

sending a modified version of said second reply e-mail message to the external contact, wherein a domain of a REPLY-TO field of said modified version of said second reply e-mail message corresponds to said domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a local part of said REPLY-TO field comprises a second modified version of said tracking string.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:
generating a second metadata object based on said second modified version of said tracking string of said second reply e-mail message, wherein said second metadata object associates said second reply e-mail message with said end user, said external contact, and said at least one business functionality; and

archiving said second reply e-mail message according to at least one characteristic of said second metadata object.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, further comprising generating a viewable communication log screen including information derived from said first metadata object and said second metadata object.

7. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said native e-mail system of said end user is web-hosted e-mail service.

8. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said native e-mail system of said end user is a dedicated desktop e-mail application.

9. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said internal e-mail facility is operated out of a same Internet domain as said web-based business information system.

10. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said initial e-mail message comprises a message body manually composed by the end user.

11. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said initial e-mail message is automatically sent on behalf of the end user by said web-based business information system.

12. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said REPLY-TO field of said initial e-mail message further comprises a display name for said end user that is substantially identical to a display name associated with said end user in said native e-mail system of the end user.

13. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said web-based business information system is provided by an application service provider and subscribed to by a business enterprise with which said end user is affiliated.

14. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said web-based business information system is self-hosted by a business enterprise with which said end user is affiliated.

15. (Currently amended) In a web-based business information system having an internal e-mail facility, a method for facilitating and tracking e-mail communications between (i) an end user of the web-based business information system and (ii) an external contact that is not an end user of the web-based business information system, comprising:

sending an initial e-mail message from said internal e-mail facility to the external contact, wherein a domain of a reply-designating header field of said initial e-mail message corresponds to a domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a local part of said reply-designating header field of said initial e-mail message comprises a tracking string encoding tracking information associated with said end user and said external contact with respect to said web-based business information system;

receiving at said internal e-mail facility a first reply e-mail message from said external contact replying to said initial e-mail message, said first reply e-mail message having a TO field including said tracking string; and

sending from said internal e-mail facility a modified version of said first reply e-mail message to a native e-mail address of the end user, said native e-mail address corresponding to a native e-mail system of the end user different than said internal e-mail facility and lying outside said web-based business information system, wherein a domain of a reply-designating header field of said modified version of said first reply e-mail message corresponds to said domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a local part of said reply-designating header field comprises a first modified version of said tracking string.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:

generating a first metadata object based on said tracking string of said first reply e-mail message, wherein said first metadata object associates said first reply e-mail message with said end user, said external contact, and at least one business functionality therebetween to be tracked by web-based business information system; and

archiving said first reply e-mail message according to at least one characteristic of said first metadata object.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

receiving a second reply e-mail message from said end user replying to said modified version of said first reply e-mail message, said second reply e-mail message having a TO field including said first modified version of said tracking string; and

sending a modified version of said second reply e-mail message to the external contact, wherein a domain of a reply-designating header field of said modified version of said second reply e-mail message corresponds to said domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a local part of said reply-designating header field comprises a second modified version of said tracking string.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein said reply-designating header fields of said initial e-mail message, said modified version of said first reply e-mail message, and said modified version of said second reply e-mail message are each REPLY-TO fields.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein said reply-designating header fields of said initial e-mail message, said modified version of said first reply e-mail message, and said modified version of said second reply e-mail message are each FROM fields.

20. (Currently Amended) In a web-based business information system having an internal e-mail facility, a method for facilitating and tracking e-mail communications between (i) an end user of the web-based business information system and (ii) an external contact that is not an end user of the web-based business information system, comprising:

sending an initial e-mail message from said internal e-mail facility to the external contact, wherein a domain of a reply-designating header field of said initial e-mail message corresponds to a domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a first thread-recurrent field of said initial e-mail message comprises a tracking string encoding tracking information associated with said end user and said external contact with respect to said web-based business information system;

receiving at said internal e-mail facility a first reply e-mail message from said external contact replying to said initial e-mail message, said first reply e-mail message having a TO field including said domain of said internal e-mail facility, said first reply e-mail message comprising said tracking string in said first thread-recurrent field thereof; and

sending from said internal e-mail facility a modified version of said first reply e-mail message to a native e-mail address of the end user, said native e-mail address

corresponding to a native e-mail system of the end user different than said internal e-mail facility and lying outside said web-based business information system, wherein a domain of a reply-designating header field of said modified version of said first reply e-mail message corresponds to said domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a second thread-recurrent field of said modified version of said first reply e-mail message comprises a first modified version of said tracking string.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising:

generating a first metadata object based on said tracking string of said first reply e-mail message, wherein said first metadata object associates said first reply e-mail message with said end user, said external contact, and at least one business functionality therebetween to be tracked by web-based business information system; and

archiving said first reply e-mail message according to at least one characteristic of said first metadata object.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

receiving a second reply e-mail message from said end user replying to said modified version of said first reply e-mail message, said second reply e-mail message having a TO field including said domain of said internal e-mail facility, said second reply e-mail message having said first modified version of said tracking string in said second thread-recurrent field thereof; and

sending a modified version of said second reply e-mail message to the external contact, wherein a domain of a reply-designating header field of said modified version of said second reply e-mail message corresponds to said domain of said internal e-mail facility, and wherein a third thread-recurrent field of said modified version of said second reply e-mail message comprises a second modified version of said tracking string.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said reply-designating header

fields of said initial e-mail message, said modified version of said first reply e-mail message, and said modified version of said second reply e-mail message are each REPLY-TO fields.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said first, second, and third thread-recurrent fields are each SUBJECT fields.

26. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said first, second, and third thread-recurrent fields are encrypted into body fields of said initial e-mail message, said modified version of said first reply e-mail message, and said modified version of said second reply e-mail message, respectively.